

**ABSTRACT**

The invention provides a quantitative realtime RT-PCR assay for detection of metastatic breast, gastric, pancreas or colon cancer cells or metastatic melanoma. The assay allows to predict disease recurrence and survival in patients with AJCC stage I and II, and III disease using multimarker panels. The method for detecting metastatic melanoma cells utilizes panels of markers selected from a group consisting of MAGE-A3, GalNAcT, MART-1, PAX3, Mitf, TRP-2, and Tyrosinase. The method for detecting metastatic breast, gastric, pancreas or colon cancer cells in paraffin-embedded samples utilizes panels of markers selected from a group consisting of C-Met, MAGE-A3, Stanniocalcin-1, mammoglobin, HSP27, GalNAcT, CK20, and  $\beta$ -HCG.